

Steps to Kindergarten Transition

A Guide to a Seamless Transition to Kindergarten



Updated July 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment	4
INTRODUCTION	5
School Readiness	5
Purpose of the Toolkit	5
Organization of the Toolkit	5
Kindergarten Transition in Hawai'i	6
RESOURCES	11
CHILDREN	18
Saying Goodbye to Early Care and Education	18
Connections: Child to Child	19
Preparing for and Entering Kindergarten	19
Practicalities: Registering a Child for Kindergarten	22
RESOURCES	23
FAMILIES	27
Families' Role in the Transition	27
RESOURCES	32
EDUCATORS	35
The Process of Transitioning to Kindergarten	35
Early Care and Education Educators & Providers	36
Kindergarten Teachers/Educators	38
RESOURCES	40
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS & PRINCIPALS	45
Administrators' and Principals' Roles in the Transition	45
RESOURCES	48
REFERENCES	51

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Hawai'i Executive Office on Early Learning would like to extend its gratitude for this concise and informative Steps to Kindergarten Transition Toolkit. A large “thank you” for all the time and effort is extended to the following individuals:

- The creators of the previous version titled, *Steps to Kindergarten Transition: A Guide to a Successful Transition to Kindergarten, 2004*
- Sheri Arima, Part B Section 619 Resource Teacher, HIDOE
- Dana Ciacci, Workforce Development Specialist, EOEL
- Phyllis Ida, retired Part B Section 619 Resource Teacher, HIDOE
- Brian Ito, Early Literacy Educational Specialist, HIDOE
- Christine Jackson, Head Start State Collaboration Director, EOEL
- Alohilani Maiava, Project Manager, EOEL
- Lauren Moriguchi, Director, EOEL
- Mary-Ann Nemoto, Learning To Grow Project Administrator, Windward Community College
- Theresa Sanchez, Transition Educational Specialist, HIDOE
- Charis-Ann Sole, researcher and writer of the Toolkit

The following groups volunteered their time to review the Toolkit and offer suggestions for improvements, and we thank them also:

- EOEL Public Pre-Kindergarten Teachers
- Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education
- Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Strategic Implementation Plan Transition Support Work Group
- Windward District Transition Team

Mahalo nui loa to our partners for their efforts to improve the lives and experiences of our littlest keiki.

Funded through the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative
This publication was made possible by Grant Number #90TP0043-01-00, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents do not represent the official views of the funding agency nor does the publication in any way constitute an endorsement of the funding agency.

INTRODUCTION

School Readiness

Act 13, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2002, described school readiness as when “young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child’s developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support.”

Additionally, Latham, S. (2018) in *Kindergarten transition and readiness*, writes that school readiness is:

“a complex and multidimensional concept that teachers, parents, researchers, and policy-makers have debated about how best to define and measure for decades (Blair, 2002; Carlton & Winsler, 1999; Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Meisels, 1998 as cited in Latham, 2018). A growing body of literature argues that school readiness occurs not just as a function of children’s skills and knowledge but as an interplay between children, schools, parents, and communities. There is an acknowledgement that parents, school, and communities play an important role in determining whether children thrive in school.”

Both definitions underscore the importance of interrelatedness when discussing the concept of school readiness. This Toolkit takes this idea of interconnectedness and echoes it throughout the document by viewing the perspectives of different stakeholders and describing the responsibility each stakeholder has toward a child’s transition to Kindergarten.

Purpose of the Toolkit

The purpose of this Toolkit is to give ideas and suggestions from the perspectives of each of these stakeholders (Child, Family, Educators, and Administrators/Principals) in order to help smooth children’s transitions to Kindergarten.

Organization of the Toolkit

The Toolkit begins with an Introduction in which the process of transitioning to Kindergarten is explained with the help of recent research. Included in this section are best practices for educators and parents/families/caregivers to become familiar with as well as a Transition Planning Tool to help educators and administrators/principals facilitate the planning process.

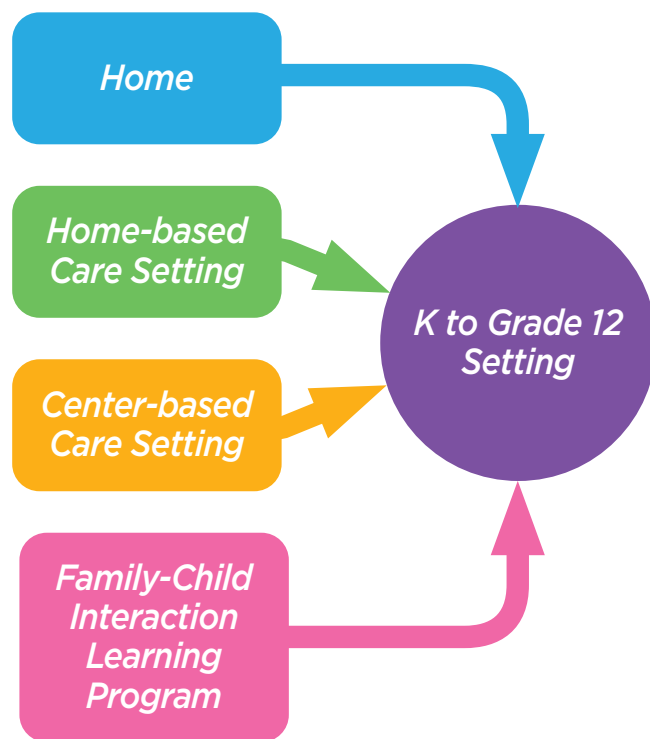
The rest of the Toolkit is organized by users:

- **Child Section:** for family members to read. The section focuses on the process of transitioning children to Kindergarten from a child’s point of view. The resources given and activities suggested will help prepare children for their transition to Kindergarten. In addition, information about registering children for Kindergarten in a Hawai’i State Department of Education (HIDOE) school - such as health requirements and documents needed for registration - is included.
- **Family Section:** also for family members to read. The information presented is for adults – parents, families, and caregivers. The section contains suggestions to help transition incoming Kindergarten children, information about General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) from the HIDOE, and a brief explanation of how the perceptions of children differ between families and educators. The resources at the end of the section elaborate on these topics.

- **Educator Section:** separated into two parts – one for the educators in early care and education programs and the other for Kindergarten teachers. Each section is written for the role of the particular type of educator and the responsibilities they have in the transition process. The resource section includes tools educators can use to help facilitate the transition process.
- **Administrator & Principal Section:** covers four areas to help administrators and principals think about the process of transitioning children to Kindergarten. The section also gives suggestions on how they can use these four areas to help guide the transition process in the role each person occupies.

The Toolkit sections are each meant to “stand alone.” This means that each section is not necessarily connected to another, so readers may see information repeated in several sections. For instance, if an educator reads the Educator’s section and also wants to read the Administrator’s/Principal’s section for further information, she would see suggestions that are repeated, such as the importance of a summer transition program, the recommendation for a Kindergarten Open House, and allowing for community visits to tour the school campus.

Also, each section contains a Resources segment and has sources of information or reminders, which we believe will prove helpful to the intended audience. For example, in this Introduction section there is a Transition Planning Guide that will help educators and administrators as they plan. The Family section has a tip card that serves as a reminder of family activities that can facilitate the transition for their children. The Children section has a list of suggested books that may help children prepare and process the change that will happen.



Kindergarten Transition in Hawai'i

In Hawai'i, thousands of young children enter Kindergarten every year with a wide range of previous early learning experiences: some directly from home; some have participated in a center-based public or private preschool, Head Start, or family-child interaction learning program; others have been cared for in a family child care setting or in informal arrangements with family, friends, and neighbors. Regardless of the setting, the transition to Kindergarten is an important milestone in a child's formative years. What happens during the transition process may lay the foundation for a child's adjustment to and future success in school. The transition to Kindergarten is much more than a one-time event. It is a journey that takes time, preparation, and advance planning.

Who Is Involved in the Transition to Kindergarten?

Transition refers to a process of change. It involves moving from one situation to another. For a child, it can be smooth and satisfying or bumpy and frightening. While it is the child who directly experiences the transition, other people are also involved and influence the child's transition – the child's family, early care and education educator/provider, the Kindergarten teacher, the elementary school principal and staff, and the community. The attitudes and actions of those who are directly involved can do a great deal to make the transition to Kindergarten a positive or not-so-positive experience for the child and her/his family.

"Kindergarten is the place in which children make important conclusions about school as a place where they want to be and about themselves as learners. If no other objectives are accomplished it is essential that the transition to school occur in a way that children and families have a positive view of the school and that children have a feeling of perceived competence as a learner."

Bailey, 1999

Why Is the Transition to Kindergarten Important?

Just as a quality early learning experience is important to young children's school success, the quality of the Kindergarten transition process also has significant implications for future educational outcomes. Children whose families are actively involved in their education and whose school entrance is positive are more likely to succeed in learning and adapt to the new setting. On the other hand, a less positive transition to Kindergarten can lead to children experiencing high levels of stress which can hinder academic performance and emotional adjustment – resulting, for example, in chronic absenteeism, failure to make academic gains (Harbin et al, 2007; Atchison & Pompelia, 2018), and the development of apathy toward school, particularly in the first and second grades (Davis, 2005).

What Can Be Done to Make the Transition to Kindergarten Seamless?

Before they enter Kindergarten, many young children have already made the transition from home care to an early care and education program or setting. Moving from a known, comfortable environment to one that is unfamiliar can be challenging, especially if careful

attention is not given to the transition. The greater the difference in settings, the more difficult the transition may prove to be.

A well-planned transition benefits children, families, and teachers. It also builds trust and relationships for the entire school community. Thoughtful planning for this transition can have meaningful results for children, families, teachers, schools, and communities that will last far beyond the first weeks of school (Harbin et al, 2007).

Critical Elements in the Transition to Kindergarten

Adults can support young children's transition to Kindergarten by viewing the transition as a **collaborative process** that happens over time.

Transition = Moving from one situation to another

Transition plan = The steps that will be taken and by whom

Transition planning = The process in advance to help families and staff make the transition process as smooth as possible

Transition activities = The events undertaken by children and their families, often initiated by educators or leaders in the school, community, to bridge the gap between preschool or home and Kindergarten

When planning for the transition, it is useful to keep in mind that **it is a process, not a single event**.

Thinking of the transition as a process means that it involves intentional partnerships between families, early care and education programs, and elementary schools. Each community works together to design a set of activities that connect programs and families. These activities go far beyond the typical transition activities, such as information packets sent home to help families get ready for Kindergarten. Although common, these low-intensity activities are not as helpful for children and families as high-intensity activities, such as visits to Kindergarten classrooms and joint planning time and child-information sharing between early care and education educators and Kindergarten teachers (Bornfreund, 2019). High-intensity transition planning encompasses basic communication that involves programs, staff, and community.

Dockett and Perry (2001) differentiate between “orientation-to-school” and “transition-to-school” programs. Orientation programs are designed to help children and parents become familiar with the school setting and are characterized by the school presenting information to the children and families. Transition activities tend to be longer term and more geared to the individual needs of the children and families. They may include orientation activities, but orientation is just a part of a more comprehensive transition plan.

Five critical elements need to be considered to ensure smooth, seamless transitions for young children and families (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003).

1. Create and promote connections and relationships in the Community. Family, school (including early care and education programs and elementary schools), and community are three major interrelated influences in a child’s life. Transition has to be understood in terms of the settings that affect child development and learning (e.g., family, classroom, community) and the connections and relationships among these settings at any given time and across time (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003). It is important for neighborhood communities to understand that school transition is not a one-size-fits-all program. What works in one community may not be effective or even needed in another community.

2. Maintain ongoing communication. Kindergarten staff can strengthen educational program continuity by getting to know each other, sharing information about their programs, and planning for effective transitions. Program administrators and school principals and other key school leaders can support educators/teachers by adopting a common transition system, model, or guide to coordinate the process. Because early care and education educators and Kindergarten teachers have limited time outside the classroom, opportunities for formal and informal contacts should be supported throughout the year by flexible time scheduling and advanced planning, preferably by a collaborative transition team that meets regularly.

“Programs for young children should not be seen as either play-oriented or academic. Rather, developmentally appropriate practice, whether in a preschool or a primary classroom, should respond to the natural curiosity of young children, reaffirm a sense of self, promote positive dispositions toward learning, and help build increasingly complex skills in the use of language, problem solving, and cooperation.”

Lombardi, 1992

3. Prepare children for the transition. Although many parties are involved in the transition to Kindergarten, children themselves are the most affected by the changes. Children can enter Kindergarten with vastly different

experiences. In turn, Kindergarten programs are diverse in purpose, structure, and schedule. No matter what a child's previous experience has been, all children need to be accepted at their individual developmental level. Preparing children for the transition to Kindergarten does not mean "getting them ready" by focusing on a narrow range of academic skills, drilling on new rules, or retaining them in preschool for another year until they are "school-ready." School should be a place where children and families can expect to find opportunities for growth and development from whatever starting point the child is beginning when entering the new setting.

4. Engage families in the transition. Successful early childhood programs actively engage families. This engagement should not stop when children reach the elementary school campus. The family's influence is fundamental in the early years of schooling because families play a significant role in supporting, guiding, and advocating on behalf of their children for effective, high-quality early learning experiences (Family Partnership Guidelines, 2013). Successful schools welcome family members in ways that go beyond traditional parent activities such as fundraising, parent-teacher conferences, May Day, and Back-to-School Night.

5. Provide program continuity through developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Continuity across early childhood programs is facilitated by the degree to which all programs for children in the community, from birth to age eight, work together to ensure continuous and effective services throughout these critical years.

Children whose teachers use developmentally appropriate practices in both early care and education programs and in Kindergarten are more likely to build on earlier

experiences to help them make sense of their world. When early learning educators/providers and Kindergarten teachers use similar strategies, children adjust more easily to school. Attending joint training sessions can help educators/teachers talk about their classroom practices and share information about how to align curriculum content and approaches to teaching. It is essential that both early care and education programs and elementary school staff work together to overcome potential barriers to smooth transitions for children and families.

Children and the families who nurture them do not develop apart from the community around them. In fact, the home, the school, and the community all contribute to children's lifelong (long-range) success. Thus, developing systematic transition strategies through transition

Early Childhood Programs & Elementary Schools

(Adapted from "Hawai'i Family Partnership Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings")

- Welcome all families by being responsive to the diversity among children and their families (languages, cultures, and socio-economic needs).
- Engage in ongoing meaningful two-way communication.
- Continuous partnering between families and educators, both in the home and educational settings, to support the child's learning and healthy development.
- Encourage and support families as advocates for their own and other children to ensure that children are treated fairly and have access to early learning opportunities.
- Involve families in program decisions that affect them and their children.

Families, Parents, & Caregivers

(Adapted from "Embracing Your Child's Journey as Your Child's First Teacher")

- Recognize that you are your child's first and longest-lasting teachers in life.
- Share personal knowledge about your child's strengths, skills, and interests with program/education staff, so that they understand your child and can better plan for your child's educational journey.
- Actively engage with program/education staff to help connect learning experiences between home and school.
- Advocate for your child's needs and work as a team with the program/education staff to support your child's success.
- Support each other as families and combine voices to ensure that children's needs are met.

planning as a common goal of communities is a way of supporting children and families in the transition process. The benefit of these systematic strategies is that children and their families will experience a seamless transition into school. The planning portion of this task should be a collaborative process that involves input from multiple stakeholders in the community, a process that takes time and energy to develop, and which is consequential. Transition planning is discussed in detail below.

Transition Planning

Transition planning is the advance planning of steps that will be taken to move children and families to Kindergarten as smoothly as possible. One tool that helps guide this process is a transition plan. The transition plan should be well thought out, the result of careful consideration and intentionally planned activities. This requires forethought and preparation, with enough time to craft a plan that works for the children, their families, early care and education programs, and schools. Planning the process of moving children from a familiar situation to a new environment usually demands an investment of time and effort. Additional time will be needed to review and sustain the plan through the transition process. Time is valuable – it is especially in short supply in the teaching profession – but it is an important factor in promoting seamless transitions to Kindergarten (Harbin, et al., 2007). Administrators of both early care and education programs and elementary schools can support this process by providing staff with time and a place to engage in the transition planning.

Creating a Transition Plan

Listed here are some principles to use in creating a transition plan (see Reference section, “Transition Plan Form” template and sample):

1. **Approach the transition planning process collaboratively.** To approach transition planning as a collaborative effort is to acknowledge and honor the value and role of all who are involved in the process – families, early care and education programs, and schools. Kindergarten educators bring a unique viewpoint to this experience because they will be facilitating this transition for all the children in their class. Early care and education educators are valuable in this collaboration because they have worked with the transitioning children in their classrooms and have expertise and information to share with the group. Families are valuable since they know their children’s interests and needs best.
2. **Involve all key stakeholders in the process.** The transition to Kindergarten is complex because it involves many people on different levels in the early childhood to Kindergarten progression. Therefore, it is a good idea to reach out and invite all relevant stakeholders in order to benefit from their perspectives when creating a transition plan. These stakeholders may vary depending on the early care and education program, community, and the children and families who are served. Key stakeholders to consider inviting to collaborate in creating a transition plan include:
 - Administrators and/or educators/providers of early care and education programs and services;
 - Principals/administrators and/or Kindergarten teachers from the elementary schools that some of the children might attend;
 - Parents/caregivers or other family members; and
 - Early childhood community partners (e.g., community-based public health centers).

3. Align children's experiences across systems. Alignment can be thought of as providing continuity across environments, curriculum, routines, and more. When things are aligned between children's current environment and their next environment, it helps reduce anxiety for pre-Kindergarteners and their families because it provides a measure of predictability (NCECDTL, 2018).



Taking a preschool class, for example, on a field trip to a Kindergarten classroom and allowing the children to explore and ask questions of the Kindergarten students and teachers can help those pre-Kindergarten children see what their new environment will be like. Early care and education educators can also use this time to learn how Kindergarten teachers communicate with families/caregivers and to observe classroom routines, so they can incorporate them in their programs, when appropriate, to begin creating an alignment with the children's next educational setting.

RESOURCES

1. National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning Transition Plan Form Template: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ttk-transition-plan-form.pdf>
 - The Transition Planning Guide can help educators and administrators in facilitating the planning process.
2. National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning Transition Plan Form Example: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ttk-transition-plan-form-example.pdf>
 - The Transition Planning Guide example gives ideas of how this guide can help educators and administrators in facilitating the planning process.
3. Transition Plan Transition Activity Ideas by Connection
 - This chart contains transition activities organized by “connection” – the way a person is connect to the transition process. The chart can be used as examples of planning process ideas.
4. Hawai'i Family Partnership Guidelines (FPG) for Early Childhood Settings: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14iO9ZSmD1beZBNhmLm46xbHKQ_cb4Sa-/view
 - These Guidelines can help early childhood practitioners in their efforts to create and/or enhance ongoing, responsive and reciprocal relationships with the families enrolled in their programs. The Guidelines include key principles and suggest actions or strategies practitioners can use to engage more effectively with families.

Adapted from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning Transition Plan Form Template. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ttk-transition-plan-form.pdf>.

Step 1: Assess your partnership

Identify committee team members and their affiliations. Designate a leader.

Committee Members:

Affiliation:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Designated Leader: _____

Step 2: Identify goals

Fill in goals for your transition team below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 3: Assess what's happening now

First, fill in the matrix on the following page, up to the "Evaluation (Step 4)" column, with current transition activities practiced in your community, deciding what type of connection each activity fosters and the focus of the activity. You may have some blank boxes.

Step 4: Identify and evaluate data on current practices

Now complete the "Evaluation (Step 4)" column of the matrix with evidence you have that practices are or are not working.

Type of connection	Sharing information	Building relational supports	Fostering alignment between settings	Evaluation (Step 4)
Child – School				
Family – School				
Program – School				
Community - School				

Step 5: Plan and prioritize

Reevaluate your goals, create new goals if necessary, and plan steps to take. First, list up to four activities or goals that could either address areas in need or strengthen/expand areas already focused on. Next, use the matrix below your list to brainstorm goal and activity logistics.

Revised/refined activities and goals (if necessary):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Goals addressed	Type of connection and activity	Transition activity	When does activity occur?	Who needs to be involved?	Potential barriers and solutions	Who is responsible for follow-up?

Transition Plan Form (Example)

Adapted from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning Transition Plan Form Example. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ttk-transition-plan-form-example.pdf>

Step 1: Assess your partnership

Identify committee team members and their affiliations. Designate a leader.

Committee Members:

Sara Rudolph

Jeffrey Smith

David Lewis

Laura Bowden

Hannah Justice

Maile Koko

Designated Leader: *Hannah Justice*

Affiliation:

School principal

Kindergarten teacher

Parent-volunteer coach

Head Start educator

Head Start education manager

ABC Preschool

Step 2: Identify goals

Fill in goals for your transition team below.

1. *Support and prepare children for Kindergarten.*
2. *Help families know more about what they can do at home to help prepare children for Kindergarten.*
3. *Get community more involved with children.*
4. _____
5. _____

Step 3: Assess what's happening now

First, fill in the matrix on the following page, up to the "Evaluation (Step 4)" column, with current transition activities practiced in your community, deciding what type of connection each activity fosters and the focus of the activity. You may have some blank boxes.

Step 4: Identify and evaluate data on current practices

Now complete the "Evaluation (Step 4)" column of the matrix with evidence you have that practices are or are not working.

Type of connection	Sharing information	Building relational supports	Fostering alignment between settings	Evaluation (Step 4)
Child – School	<i>Early childhood (EC) educators talk and read books about Kindergarten (K).</i>	<i>Through home visits, children meet their K teacher before school starts.</i>	<i>Children of preschool age practice some K rules and routines toward the end of the preschool year.</i>	<i>Children seem less anxious and more excited about going to K than in previous years, as reported by the K teachers.</i>
Family – School	<i>Family receives a general letter about K before school starts. EC educators provide families with information about the expectations and procedures to register for K.</i>	<i>Elementary school holds a family orientation for incoming students before K starts, so families can get to know their children's teachers.</i>	<i>Families are given a set of activities to do with children over the summer before their K year.</i>	<i>Families seem better informed about K than in previous years, as reported by K teachers. Participant rates at back-to-school nights increase.</i>
Program – School	<i>EC educators discuss children's strengths and challenges with K teachers.</i>	<i>EC programs and elementary school leaders meet to discuss common ways to support children. EC and K educators develop early learning standards together.</i>	<i>EC programs and elementary school leaders meet to discuss common ways to support children. EC and K educators develop early learning goals and expectations together.</i>	<i>K teachers report feeling better informed about where children are and what individual children's needs are when they enter school.</i>
Community - School	<i>School makes K registration announcement in the local newspaper and via flyers posted at community centers.</i>			<i>K registration increases before the first day of school.</i>

Step 5: Plan and prioritize

Reevaluate your goals, create new goals if necessary, and plan steps to take. First, list up to four activities or goals that could either address areas in need or strengthen/expand areas already focused on. Next, use the matrix below your list to brainstorm goal and activity logistics.

Revised/refined activities and goals (if necessary):

1. Provide more summer experiences for children.
2. Help families prepare during summer.
3. Get community more involved during the summer.
4. _____

Goals addressed	Type of connection and activity	Transition activity	When does activity occur?	Who needs to be involved?	Potential barriers and solutions	Who is responsible for follow-up?
1, 2, 3	Family-School (information sharing) Community-School (building relational supports) Child-School (building relational supports)	Organize K camp to introduce incoming K to teachers and routines that they will see in the new school year; hold family sessions to inform them of things to do before the start of school	End of EC program, summer before K	Office staff for mailing and fund-raising Community team, schools	Informing people and getting them to participate Finding funding	Hannah – sending info home to EC families Laura – contacting local media to get the word out Jeff – fund-raising (finding local sponsors)
1	Program-School (fostering alignment between settings)	Coordinate between EC and K curricula and routines; EC educators share information about individual children	Ongoing	EC and K educators		Maile – organizing educator meetings

Transition Activity Ideas by Connection

Type of Connection	Transition Activity
Child–Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish peer connections within the preschool class (e.g., photo phone book). • Create connections among preschool peers who will be in the same Kindergarten. • Initiate preschool peer connections with Kindergarten peers. • Arrange for elementary school children from different cultures to be “pen pal buddies” with preschool children from the same cultural background.
Child–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a connection between preschool children and Kindergarten teachers. • Create a connection between children and the Kindergarten using school functions. • Have children practice Kindergarten rituals in preschool. • Incorporate preschool activities into the Kindergarten year. • Encourage preschool teachers to stay in contact with their former students. • Encourage Kindergarten support staff to visit preschool children. • Conduct Spring Kindergarten orientation for preschool children.
Family–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact families during the first few days of preschool and Kindergarten. • Assess family strengths and needs. • Maintain periodic contact with families. • Connect families to community resources. • Encourage family participation in home learning activities. • Encourage family participation in the classroom and at school events. • Conduct regular family meetings, including about transition issues. • Provide opportunities for parents to engage in planning activities, offer input and feedback, and lead activities when appropriate. • Share information about individual children with families, preschool teachers, and Kindergarten teachers. • Use newsletters and resource materials. • Send letters home. • Set-up two-way communication. • Conduct Spring Orientation about Kindergarten for preschool families. • Conduct individual meetings between teachers and families. • Conduct parent orientation at the beginning of the year at preschools and Kindergartens.
School–School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster inter-school collaboration about programs and classroom practices. • Conduct visits: preschool teachers visit Kindergarten classrooms and Kindergarten teachers visit preschool classrooms. • Communicate about curriculum (preschool and Kindergarten personnel). • Connect about a specific child (preschool and Kindergarten teachers). • Share written records. • Align curriculum. • Align early learning standards.
School–Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build useful policies related to the Kindergarten transition. • Identify and communicate community expectations for children. • Establish policy coordination through inter-agency connections.

CHILDREN

... Saying goodbye and preparing for Kindergarten

Children come to Kindergarten from a variety of pre-Kindergarten (early care and education) experiences: family child care homes; home visiting; informal care with family, friends, and neighbors; family-child interaction learning programs; or public/private center-based programs. They may also come directly from their homes without having had any early learning experiences. Kindergarten classrooms are the destination of children from all these settings and experiences.

As she or he transitions to Kindergarten, your child will experience a new and different environment. If your child has spent her/his days at home, or has participated in early care and education (ECE) programs, the transition to a classroom can be both exciting and challenging (Loewenberg, 2017). It can be exciting because your child is moving to something that the adults in her/his life regard as important. At the same time, the transition can also be upsetting and confusing, because your child is leaving a familiar place, people, and routines. She/he, upon entering Kindergarten, must learn to cope with a different place; changed expectations; a new role, peer group, and authority figure; and many new experiences – like eating in a cafeteria. With the right support and facilitation, the transition to Kindergarten can be well managed.

This section of the Toolkit provides suggestions on how to prepare your child to reduce the stress, confusion, and uncertainty that is often associated with making this transition. This section is separated into two parts: (1) suggestions on how to help your child say goodbye to her/his ECE experiences; and (2) suggestions on how to prepare your child for entering into Kindergarten itself. This section also includes a general guide to registering your child for Kindergarten in a Hawai'i public school.

Benefits of a Seamless Transition include your child looking forward to attending school regularly; your child showing steady growth both in academic and social-emotional skills; and as parents and caregivers, you become actively involved in your child's education, feel confident, and have a sense of pride and commitment.

Atchison & Pompelia, 2018

Saying Goodbye to Early Care and Education

Helping your child say goodbye to their ECE experiences can be a helpful way to begin to transition her/him into the next phase of education. Some ideas to help your child say goodbye and ways to stay in touch:

- ✓ Talk with your child about moving on to another phase in life which includes saying goodbye to people, places, or programs your child took part in.
- ✓ Take and exchange photos or make a photobook with the adults who were a part of your child's pre-Kindergarten years.
- ✓ If your child has attended an ECE program: allow her/him to participate in activities that the program has set up (e.g., graduation, a school fair of the children's work, tours of Kindergarten classrooms or campuses, and goodbye celebrations).
- ✓ Spend time showing the child your excitement for, and enjoyment of, the activities that come along with saying goodbye and transitioning to Kindergarten.

Connections: Child to Child

Allowing your child to say goodbye to the classmates she/he has built relationships with during her/his pre-Kindergarten years can help bring closure to that experience. Maintaining relationships in an informal way with her/his special friends can help your child know there can be relational continuity outside the bounds of specific programs. Also, linking your child to peers who will participate in the same Kindergarten program can be a helpful part of the transition process. Some ways to do these are:

- ✓ **Saying Goodbye:** Taking and exchanging photos or making a photobook with the children who were a part of your child's pre-Kindergarten years.
- ✓ **Maintaining:** If you wish, exchanging ways to keep in contact – phone numbers, email addresses, or social media contact information.
- ✓ **Maintaining:** Setting up playdates for some of your child's friends over the summer. Also, encouraging play links over the summer with peers who will attend the same Kindergarten.
- ✓ **Linking:** Researching if the Kindergarten your child will attend has ways to connect your child with her/his future classmates during the summer. For example, community programs they recommend or know their students take part in, summer programs or summer classes the school itself organizes.

Preparing for and Entering Kindergarten

As parents and caregivers, you play a large role in helping guide your child through the new skills and expectations needed to smoothly negotiate the transition to Kindergarten. Smooth transitions can be accomplished if the adults who care for the child try to view the situation from the child's perspective. By trying to understand the changes she/he is experiencing and the way she/he is coping with and handling the changes, you can help your child transition to Kindergarten with confidence.

Here are some ideas to help prepare your child to enter and navigate her/his Kindergarten experience:

- ✓ **Think through and prepare in advance** for the changes that will happen in your family's life and your child's life and routines when the child begins Kindergarten. Talk with your child about the changes that will occur. You may want to work with your child to create a chart with pictures that will help them remember what each new routine will look like. Changes in routines include earlier/new bedtimes, morning routines around waking up,

A Kindergarten Experience

In Kindergarten, children experience a full day of school, possibly for the first time. This new classroom comes with new responsibilities, less time for play, and an increased focus on academic subjects like reading, writing, and math (Steen, 2011). Due to the increased academic focus, Kindergarten teachers typically spend more time teaching new skills rather than supervising activities, such as time in learning centers. In addition, there is often a change in the nature of teacher-child interactions, due to the larger number of children in the classroom, and therefore, higher teacher-child ratios.

These differences usually require children to become more independent in the classroom and to begin interacting with a larger group of peers without adult support (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). Children have to learn to adjust to new environmental and social situations and expectations in order to feel comfortable learning in Kindergarten.

getting ready, and arriving at school on time, and after-school activities like attending the A-plus program, and/or pickup times and routines.

- ✓ Have your family, especially your child, practice some school-day routines before the actual first day of school. For instance, practice earlier/new bedtimes, waking up at a specific time, getting ready for the day, and having breakfast. This may keep your child from becoming confused, groggy, cranky, or unwilling to get out of bed on the first day of school.
- ✓ Involve your child in the new routines whenever possible. For example, let your child pick out/lay out clothes for the next day, pack a backpack, and choose a special object to take to the first days of school like a family photo, a letter you have written and read to her/him, or a small comfort object (check with Kindergarten ahead of time).
- ✓ Talk with your child about the feelings you are experiencing and the feelings she/he may be experiencing about Kindergarten transition. Listen carefully and without judgment to your child's thoughts and emotions. Let your child know it is okay to cry a bit, because growing up can be difficult at times. Try to ease any fears she/he may have and reassure your child that going to school is a big step, but that she/he will do well, and in time will feel more comfortable in school, make new friends, and enjoy learning new things.
- ✓ In light of the importance of the role of independence in Kindergarten, begin practicing this with your child. For example, practice separation from your child – spending time apart – especially if your child has had little experience being away from you. Reassure your child that you will return, and then return when you said you would. Also encourage your child to do small tasks independently, particularly tasks that children are expected to do at school like toileting, cleaning up or putting away things they have used, or eating meals independently.
- ✓ In addition to practicing separation, it can be helpful to prepare your child for other adjustments needed for new routines and expectations. Simple activities that may help with expectations and adjustments that will be a part of Kindergarten include:



- ☐ Have a set bedtime routine that ensures your child sleeps at least 8 hours a night.
- ☐ Offer lots of opportunities to color, paint, mark, write, snip with child-safe scissors, draw, trace shapes, and paste.
- ☐ Offer opportunities to go to a neighborhood playground to play on climbing structures.
- ☐ Brush teeth at least twice a day under your supervision.
- ☐ Offer opportunities and encouragement to play with other children of similar age in the neighborhood or with former peers.
- ☐ Read books together and discuss them.

Other ideas on how to support your child as she/he prepares to enter Kindergarten can be found in the Resources at the end of this section in the handout titled “Being Ready for Each Day.”

- ✓ Read books to help your child understand what going to

Kindergarten will look and feel like. Here are a few suggestions:

- ❑ *Do You Want to be My Friend?* by Eric Carle
- ❑ *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen
- ❑ *Vera's First Day of School* by Vera Rosenberry
- ❑ *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate
- ❑ *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson
- ❑ *The Pout-Pout Fish Goes to School* by Deborah Diesen
- ❑ *Getting Ready for Kindergarten* by Mary Ann & Eric Nemoto



- ✓ Register and attend a summer transition program for incoming Kindergarteners, such as Keiki Steps to Kindergarten or Kinder Camp. Ask your child's school if this program is available. It is usually a free program schools organize that helps familiarize incoming Kindergarteners with the school environment, school routines, and new expectations. It typically lasts from a few days to a few weeks.

If a summer transition program is not available, schools often offer a transition event, such as 'Ohana/Family Fun Day, 'Ohana/Family Fun Night, or Kindergarten Open House. It is an invitation for families to bring children to school to orient them to the school environment, personnel, rules, routines, and expectations. It is an opportunity for children and their families to meet their Kindergarten teachers for the first time. Contact the school office to check what transition activities they offer and when these events are scheduled.

- ✓ Have children participate in visiting a Kindergarten classroom or a local school campus. This can be arranged through your child's ECE program. If your child does not attend an ECE program or your child's ECE program does not offer this, elementary schools will often allow children and their families to tour the campus on their own. Call your school's office for an appointment. When visiting, be sure to show your child where the Kindergarten classrooms, bathrooms, playground, library, and cafeteria are located. After the visit, talk with your child specifically about the changes that will come at the new school and how it will be different from the previous year: the new school environment, new teacher, new classroom, new friends and classmates, and new routines, rules, and expectations.

Practicalities: Registering a Child for Kindergarten

In Hawai'i, children must be 5-years-old on or before July 31 to enter Kindergarten in the upcoming school year. If your child is 5 years old on or before July 31, you can register her/him for Kindergarten. The registration period usually starts around January or February. Check the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) website for information about Kindergarten registration and how to enroll.



Children must attend the school that serves the geographic area where they reside. You can search using the HIDOE's School Site Locator tool – when you enter your home address, the tool will show service boundaries for that area's elementary, middle, and high schools. You may want to directly contact the elementary school in your neighborhood to verify that it is the correct school, since service boundaries can change. Also, the school registrar can help explain the registration process and answer any questions, as these may vary from school to school.

When you go to the school to register your child, be sure to bring these documents:

- ✓ Health records (Form 14) – your child must have a physical examination, written documentation of required immunizations, and tuberculosis clearance to enter school on the first day. <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Enrollment/StudentHealthRecord.pdf>
- ✓ Birth Certificate – the school requires an original or certified copy to verify your child's age.
- ✓ Legal documents – if there were changes to your child's name, custody arrangement, or guardianship, the school needs the legal documents that verify these changes.
- ✓ Proof of current local address – the school requires a document such as an electric, telephone, or cable bill, or a housing or rental agreement that shows the address of your child's home. Children whose families are experiencing homelessness are covered by enrollment guidelines provided in the McKinney-Vento Act.
- ✓ Some schools may require other specific forms of documentation.

If your child receives any special-needs services and/or English is not her/his first language, it is important to share this information with her/his school. Also, schools greatly appreciate early registration. Schools need to make preparations for their incoming Kindergarten students, and this takes time, effort, and coordination. Knowing the number of new students earlier rather than later helps them plan.

Children with Special Needs

HIDOE provides special education services at no cost to families with children aged 3 to 22 who demonstrate a need for specially designed instruction. Eligibility is verified through an evaluation process. If you have concerns about your child's development and learning, contact your child's school and request an evaluation. The request can be made verbally, in person or by phone; in a written letter, faxed or emailed; or by filling out the State of Hawai'i Request for Evaluation form, which you can obtain from the school. For additional information on special education, refer to Special Education section of the HIDOE website.

Children Who are English Language/Dual Language Learners

HIDOE English Learner (EL) Program provides additional instructional activities and supports for children whose home language is not English. In Kindergarten, children who may have limited English language development are tested for English language skills when they first enter school using the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). The test helps determine what kind of English language support is needed for the child to progress in school. For additional information, refer to English Learner Program section of the HIDOE website.

RESOURCES

1. Suggested Books for Kindergarten Transition
 - A list of suggested books which may help your child to begin to prepare and process the change that will happen.
2. Documents Needed for Kindergarten Registration
 - Reminder cards families can print and keep handy. Alternatively, ECE program staff can print the cards and hand them out to families of children enrolling in a HIDOE school.
3. DOH Vaccine Handout
 - A notice to families that the Department of Health has issued new Health regulations (taking effect July 1, 2020) that pertain to the enrollment of children in HIDOE schools. Refer to Vaccines & Immunization section of the DOH website: www.health.hawaii.gov.
4. Learning To Grow: Raising a School-Ready Child Being Ready for Each Day
 - A handout for families about simple things children need to do to prepare for the transition to Kindergarten. The handout suggests things families can do to start the process. <http://learningtogrowhawaii.org/resources/topic/school-readiness/>
5. Learning To Grow: "Getting Ready for Kindergarten" by Mary Ann & Eric Nemoto
 - A locally inspired storybook about a girl, Leilani, and a boy, Tino, who prepare for Kindergarten.

Suggested Books for Kindergarten Transition

Title by Author	Description
<i>Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner</i> by A. Schwartz	Annabelle Swift has been tutored for Kindergarten by her older sister, Lucy.....Will it help?
<i>Countdown to Kindergarten</i> By Alison McGhee	It's just ten days before Kindergarten, and a little girl has heard all there is to know...from a first grader... about what it's going to be like.
<i>Do You Want to Be My Friend?</i> by Eric Carle	This book shows how Little Mouse seeks and eventually finds a friend.
<i>First Day Jitters</i> by Julie Danneberg	A new spin on the sheer terror suffered by millions of children as the first day of school approaches. However, this book is not about a child, but a teacher who is afraid of HER first day!
<i>Friends at School</i> by Rochelle Bunnett	Children learn what they live. Beautiful photographs which convey the importance of inclusion from a child's perspective. Experience a great day in a wonderful Kindergarten classroom.
<i>Harry Gets Ready for School</i> by Harriet Ziefert	Is school ready for Harry? Is Harry ready for school? Everyone has a lot to do before the first day of school.
<i>The Kissing Hand</i> by Audrey Wood	Chester Raccoon does not want to go to school. He wants to stay with his mother. She tells him a family secret that will make school seem just as cozy as home.
<i>Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!</i> by Nancy Carlson	Henry Mouse discovers that Kindergarten is even better than he thought it would be.
<i>Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten</i> by Joseph Slate	It's the first day of Kindergarten and Miss Bindergarten has to get the classroom ready. Her 26 students are an ABC bunch of rhymes and laughs. Also see Miss Bindergarten Celebrates the 100th Day.

Suggested Books for Kindergarten Transition

Title by Author	Description
<i>The Night Before Kindergarten</i> by Natasha Wing	“ ‘Twas the night before Kindergarten, and as they prepared, kids were excited and a little bit scared. They tossed and they turned about in their beds, while visions of school supplies danced in their heads.....”
<i>Owen</i> by Kevin Henkes	Owen has a blankie that he fondly names Fuzzy. With Kindergarten just around the corner, his mother finds the perfect way for Owen to hang onto his blankie.
<i>School Bus</i> by Donald Crews	The school bus can be a new and sometimes scary experience for young children. Colorful illustrations.
<i>Sheila Rae, the Brave</i> by Kevin Henkes	Sheila Rae is not afraid of anything.....until she gets lost on the way home from school.
<i>Tiptoe Into Kindergarten</i> by Jacqueline Rogers	A preschooler tiptoes into her older brother’s classroom to find paints, puzzles, blocks, and books. A perfect book to introduce a young child to the school experience.
<i>Tom Goes to Kindergarten</i> by Margaret Wild	Tom can’t wait to go to Kindergarten! His family walks him to school and they decide to stay with him. Now they love school, too. Vibrant watercolor animal characters.
<i>Vera’s First Day of School</i> by Vera Rosenberry	Spunky Vera is off to her first day of school in this encouraging story about new adventures.
<i>When You Go to Kindergarten</i> by James Howe	Beautiful photographs give children a peek into what life as a Kindergartener is really like. This book addresses everything from bus rides to fire drills to the life in the classroom.
<i>Will I Have a Friend?</i> by Miriam Cohen	Illustrations show the diverse and completely real antics of a Kindergarten classroom.



Documents Needed for Kindergarten Registration



- ❖ **Birth Certificate**
- ❖ **Form 14**
A complete physical examination within one year before school entrance. All immunization requirements must be met.
- ❖ **TB Clearance**
Within one year before entering school.
- ❖ **Proof of Residency**
A current utility bill, such as water or electricity.

ALL DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS.

Documents Needed for Kindergarten Registration



- ❖ **Birth Certificate**
- ❖ **Form 14**
A complete physical examination within one year before school entrance. All immunization requirements must be met.
- ❖ **TB Clearance**
Within one year before entering school.
- ❖ **Proof of Residency**
A current utility bill, such as water or electricity.

ALL DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS.

Documents Needed for Kindergarten Registration



- ❖ **Birth Certificate**
- ❖ **Form 14**
A complete physical examination within one year before school entrance. All immunization requirements must be met.
- ❖ **TB Clearance**
Within one year before entering school.
- ❖ **Proof of Residency**
A current utility bill, such as water or electricity.

ALL DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS.

Documents Needed for Kindergarten Registration



- ❖ **Birth Certificate**
- ❖ **Form 14**
A complete physical examination within one year before school entrance. All immunization requirements must be met.
- ❖ **TB Clearance**
Within one year before entering school.
- ❖ **Proof of Residency**
A current utility bill, such as water or electricity.

ALL DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS.

FAMILIES

... Making your own connections to the school

Families play an important role in preparing and guiding their children through the Kindergarten transition process. How you, as parents and caregivers, handle this transition can influence how well your children adjust to this and later transitions in life. Beginning something new can be stressful, and adjustment takes concentration and effort, especially for a young child. A few tears, some emotional displays, and an occasional “meltdown” from your child can be expected, particularly in the early days of Kindergarten. As families, you can help your child adapt by preparing in advance, clearly explaining the changes about to take place, and listening to doubts or fears your child may express. You can also show confidence in your child’s ability to handle the transition and display a positive attitude when talking with her/him about starting this new phase of life.

“Families teach the values and behaviors they feel are needed to prepare their children for life. From birth, they play a critical role in laying the foundation for their keiki’s success.”

Family Hui, 2019

This section of the Toolkit is about different aspects of the transition to Kindergarten that you may want to become familiar with: creating partnerships between home and school, Hawai‘i State Department of Education (HIDOE) expectations of student performance and evaluation or General Learner Outcomes (GLOs), and understanding that you and teachers have different roles in your child’s life which often means you and the teacher may see your child differently.

The handout “Transitions Affect the Whole Community of Learners” included in the Resources area at the end of this section may help you, as a parent or caregiver, to start thinking about questions you and/or your child may have as the transition to Kindergarten begins. For a few more resources to help navigate this transition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has compiled information for families on its website (see link in the Resources area below).

In addition to getting your child ready for Kindergarten, it is also important for you, as a parent or caregiver, to make meaningful connections to your child’s new school and its personnel. Establishing family-school connections during the transition can be helpful in good ongoing communication with the school (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2001). Ongoing communication between home and classroom environments helps support a child’s adjustment to school. (Steen, 2011).

Families’ Role in the Transition

Families can contribute to young children’s seamless transition to Kindergarten in the following ways:

- ✓ Know what is expected for the Kindergarten registration process

This information is covered in the Children section of this Toolkit. Be sure to look at the “Practicalities: Registering A Child for Kindergarten” unit for tips and resources on how to begin Kindergarten registration and which documents you will need. In



addition, the Resources area has a tip card for families as a reminder of activities families can do to help in the Kindergarten transition. You may also want to watch for the posting of your child's school's Kindergarten registration banner, which is usually put up on school grounds around January or February to inform families of when Kindergarten registration will begin.

- ✓ **Transitioning: Before School, the First Day, the First Week**
(Adapted from *"Transitioning to Kindergarten"* from NAEYC)

Before school starts

- ☐ Read books about going to a new school.
- ☐ Get into a morning and bedtime routine during the week.
- ☐ Label everything with your child's name.
- ☐ Tell the teacher and school nurse if your child has allergies or special needs.

On the first day

- ☐ Give your child a smile and a hug, tell her you love her, and wave goodbye.
- ☐ Help your child feel comfortable about the first day of school and separating from you.
- ☐ Wait to ask the teacher specific questions you may have because first days are very busy for everyone.

During the first week

- ☐ Set aside a time each day to talk with your child about what happened at school and how she or he is feeling.
- ☐ Read everything the school sends home.
- ☐ Celebrate! You and your child have made it through the first week of Kindergarten.

- ✓ **Become familiar with HDOE's General Learner Outcomes (GLOs)**

The General Learner Outcomes, or GLOs, serve as the basis on which all students' performances are evaluated at all grade levels in all academic areas in Hawai'i's public schools, including Public Charter Schools. They are the overarching goals that schools use to guide learning for all students, Kindergarten through Grade 12.



Teachers use rubrics. Rubrics are grading guides that show different levels of students' knowledge, abilities, and behaviors in meeting expected learning outcomes. The rubrics are built upon the GLOs to assess students' progress. Families and children are first introduced to GLOs in the child's report card, beginning from Kindergarten. GLOs will continue to be used throughout the child's journey through the public school system.

General Learner Outcomes	Description	Kindergarten Expectation
<i>Self-Directed Learner</i>	Has the ability to be responsible for one's own learning	To work independently and ask for help when needed, organize workspace and materials, make productive use of class time, and set goals.
<i>Community Contributor</i>	Understands that it is essential for human beings to work together	To participate cooperatively and appropriately with others to achieve shared goals, show respect and recognize feelings of others, follow school and classroom rules, and make good choices.
<i>Complex Thinker</i>	Demonstrates critical thinking and problem-solving strategies	To demonstrate using her/his knowledge and experiences from the past to solve problems, explain answers and make adjustments, and work out solutions in different ways.
<i>Quality Producer</i>	Recognizes and produces quality work	To try to complete work neatly and correctly, and to set and work toward learning goals.
<i>Effective Communicator</i>	Communicates effectively – to listen carefully, as well as to share their thoughts and feelings with others in a way that others can understand	To speak in front of a group, listen well to understand, be able to follow directions, and be able to communicate their ideas through speaking, drawing, and writing.
<i>Effective/Ethical User of Technology</i>	Uses a variety of technologies effectively and ethically	To use school materials/tools properly (e.g., books, computers, TV, tablets, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue, rulers); use various technologies to find information (e.g., books, computers, tablets) and create new products; explain how technology is used every day; and use technology in a responsible manner.

More information about the Kindergarten GLOs can be found at these DOE websites:

- <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/LearnerOutcomes/Pages/home.aspx>
- http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/GLO/GLOs_Kinder.pdf

Included in the Resources section is a chart entitled “The Learning Continuum: A Family Guide to General Learner Outcomes” which has useful ideas about how you can work on the GLOs with your child at home through fun activities before starting Kindergarten. The included activities are ways to “play” with your child, in ways that become learning experiences connecting everyday interactions with GLOs.

✓ Building a partnership with the school

Your involvement in your child’s education may lay the foundation for her/his success in school. Building a positive relationship with your child’s teachers and school is an important part of being involved. Research clearly shows that strong partnerships between home and school lead to positive outcomes for children (Halgunseth, 2009). Here are some ways to build this partnership:

- ❑ Introduce yourself to your child’s teacher at the start of the school year, and keep in touch throughout the year;
- ❑ Consider yourself and your child’s teacher partners in your child’s education – explore ways that you can work together to support your child;
- ❑ Keep yourself informed about what’s going on at your child’s school;
- ❑ Ask about resources and services that can benefit your child; and
- ❑ Discuss any special needs that may affect your child’s learning with her/his teacher as soon as possible.

✓ Included in the Resources section is a handout entitled “Building a Family-School Partnership” which provides detailed information for each of the points above, how to build a family-school partnership, and what families and caregivers can expect or request from schools to support children’s learning and success.

✓ Realize that teachers and families have different perceptions

Strong partnerships between teachers and families are important. It is also important to recognize the different roles that teachers and families have and the different perceptions

that come with those roles. Teachers come from the viewpoint of how to best educate your child in the classroom. Families and caregivers come from the perspective of how to raise your child to become a competent, responsible adult. These two viewpoints often coincide nicely, but not always. This is especially true when there are differences of opinion on what is best for your child. Following is a chart, which might help explain some of the differences in perception between families and teachers.



HERE WE COME... READY FOR SCHOOL!

A Seamless Transition to Kindergarten for All the Children

Teachers and Families Have Different Perceptions

Most teachers realize how important it is to communicate with families, yet they often feel frustrated in their efforts to communicate. One reason may be a lack of school-to-home communication skills. Another reason may be differences in teachers' and families' perceptions.

Difference in Perception That Can Interfere with School-to-Home Communication

(Adapted from *Steps to Kindergarten Transition A Guide to a Successful Transition to Kindergarten*, 2004)

Teachers	Families and Caregivers
Group – must focus on the whole class.	Individual – is concerned with own child's individual progress and needs.
Established skills – knows what child has mastered.	Emerging skills – is concerned with what child is learning.
Present – is concerned with child's present development.	History – has the perspective on how far the child has come.
Future – looks to what child will be able to do in the future, career potential.	Present – is concerned about the here and now.
Specificity – is concerned with mastering specific skills.	Diffused – tends to see whole child's ongoing development.
Cognitive – sees child more abstractly, is able to distance self from child.	Emotional – is emotionally involved with child.
Achieved/chosen profession – encourages child to make professional career choices.	Given – family accepts the child as she or he is.
Dominant status – occupies a position of power and expertise.	Subordinate status – may feel ill-informed, powerless, helpless.
Universal – looks for the best way to work with all children.	Individualized – wants to have child approached and taught as an individual.

RESOURCES

1. Transitions Affect the Whole Community of Learners

- A handout that may help you, as parents or caregivers, start to think about questions you or your child may have in beginning the transition to Kindergarten

2. Tips for Parents on Kindergarten Transition

- A tip card that serves as a reminder of activities you can do to help facilitate the transition for your child. You can print and keep the Tip card handy to serve as reminders to practice these activities with your child.

3. The Learning Continuum: A Family Guide to General Learner Outcomes

- A chart with useful ideas about how you can work on HDOE General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) with your child through fun activities even before the start of Kindergarten.

4. Building a Family-School Partnership (Learning to Grow)

- Building a Family-School Partnership handout explains how to build a family-school partnership with your child's school, and what you, as parents or caregivers, can expect or request from schools to further support your child's learning and success. Refer to School Readiness Resources section of the Learning To Grow website: www.learningtogrowhawaii.org.

5. Embracing Your Journey As Your Child's First Teacher

- A family guide with four ideas to support your child's healthy development at home and in their early learning programs: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14C_21hCEivBrwQ0nbQsYd83iMJOB9HvP/view.

6. For additional resources: These are reputable websites with information for parents, families, and caregivers to review on your own.

- Administration for Children & Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center has comprehensive transition resources for families, caregivers and educators. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions>.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has information for families and caregivers to review to help in transitioning a child into Kindergarten and into a classroom setting. Refer to Our Work Families section of the NAEYC website: www.naeyc.org.

HERE WE COME... READY FOR SCHOOL!

Transitions Affect Whole Community of Learners

Questions you, as a family and caregiver, and your child may have in beginning the transition into Kindergarten.

Questions my child has about Kindergarten:	Other questions we have in regard to the bus, lunch money, dress code, campus layout, supplies, etc.:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____
Questions my family has about Kindergarten:	Some ways to help my child before school starts:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____• _____



Tips for Parents on Kindergarten Transition

My family helps me out...

I need to visit my new school ahead of time.

- ☐ Take me there and walk around with me.
- ☐ Show me my drop-off and pick-up point.
- ☐ Show me where my new classroom is and where the office, cafeteria, restroom, and playground are.

I need to get used to my new school routine.

- ☐ Put me to bed and get me up at the new times for two weeks before school starts
- ☐ If needed, walk me to the bus stop and point out some landmarks for me.

I need a good breakfast before school.

- ☐ Help me eat a balanced meal.
- ☐ Find out where my new school serves breakfast.

I need to feel secure and comfortable using the school restrooms.

- ☐ Show me where the bathrooms are when we visit my new school.
- ☐ Go with me into public restrooms when we are away from home.

I need to be able to identify myself.

- ☐ Help me memorize my full name, my address, and phone number and your name or names.
- ☐ I need your support at my new school.
- ☐ Talk with my teacher on a regular basis about how I'm doing.
- ☐ Attend parent meetings at my new school.
- ☐ Volunteer to help out at school activities.

Adapted from Windward STEPS



Tips for Parents on Kindergarten Transition

I am confident and prepared...

I need to feel excited and comfortable about starting Kindergarten.

- ☐ Let me know that you are excited about me starting Kindergarten.
- ☐ Listen carefully to my thoughts and any concerns about my new school.
- ☐ Play a game like "you're the teacher, ask me something," to pretend I'm in school already.

I need to know what Kindergarten routines will be like.

- ☐ Teach me to follow directions by giving me simple steps for simple chores.
- ☐ Help me to learn how to share with other children, to wait my turn and sit in a circle for a story with my friends.

I need to feel good about myself.

- ☐ Be patient and let me develop at my own pace.
- ☐ Praise me for my strengths and even small accomplishments.
- ☐ Pay attention to me and listen to my ideas.
- ☐ Teach me that all my feelings are okay, but not all my actions are okay. For example, it's okay to be upset but it's not okay to hit somebody.
- ☐ Teach me ways to calm myself down when I get frustrated.

I need to learn to get along with others.

- ☐ Show me ways to make new friends, by having some of my classmates over for a play date.
- ☐ Help me understand how I can be friends with children who are different from me.
- ☐ Teach me what to do when someone hurts my feelings.

I need to know how to talk with others and listen to them.

- ☐ Talk to me about things I'm interested in.
- ☐ Teach me how to know when it's my turn to speak and when I need to listen.
- ☐ Teach me words to describe my feelings and needs, and when to use them.
- ☐ Above all, please show me (model) the behavior, attitudes, and values you would like to see me learn.

Fold here

EDUCATORS

... Preparing to say goodbye/ Preparing to say hello

Educators and teachers of early care and education (ECE) programs are responsible for preparing children to move seamlessly into Kindergarten (saying goodbye).

Kindergarten teachers are responsible for walking children through the first days of Kindergarten and welcoming them into elementary school (saying hello).



It is important for educators to remember that children and families are experiencing this transition in their own ways with their own emotions. For children and families, the transition to Kindergarten is a time of moving on and saying goodbye to experiences and people they have become familiar with, as well as welcoming new experiences and adjusting to new expectations. It is often a time of sadness at saying goodbye, and at the same time, excitement about what the future holds. Doing this exercise in perspective can be a powerful tool to help educators think about how to plan for transitioning children from ECE to Kindergarten.

A few additional tools are provided in this Toolkit to help ECE educators and Kindergarten teachers think through the process of transitioning to Kindergarten, how to engage in transition planning, create a transition plan, and provide transition activities for the children and their families.

The Process of Transitioning to Kindergarten

To begin thinking about transitioning children to Kindergarten, educators must realize that transitioning is a process that happens over time and builds on itself. It is not an event or series of events, which once accomplished, completes the transition. Instead, it is a collaborative process in which ECE educators help guide the transition smoothly and in a way in which all transitioning children feel they can jump forward to Kindergarten seamlessly. To do this, a coherent, cohesive transition plan must be in place.

ECE educators and staff must also manage the transition with sensitivity and understanding about how children and their families are feeling (Steen, 2011). As stated above, the transition can be an emotional process for children and their family members. Empathetic, compassionate educators and staff can support and guide them through a seamless transition into Kindergarten.

It is important for educators to remember that just as different children enter ECE programs with varying levels of experience, knowledge, and skills, they also leave the programs and enter Kindergarten the same way — with varying levels of experience, knowledge, and skills. Kindergarten teachers must be ready to work with every child at her/his own developmental level, and with her/his own individual strengths. A Kindergarten teacher is responsible for looking past the narrow range of academic skills a child brings with her/him and seeing the child as a whole. Classrooms and entire schools are places that children and their families look to for opportunities to grow and learn, whatever the starting point of the individual child.

Transition Activity Ideas:

There are many activities that can help children transition to Kindergarten. “Low-intensity” activities such as informational packets sent home for parents to read are not as helpful as “high-intensity” activities such as visits to Kindergarten classrooms and information sharing across educational sites (Bornfreund, 2019). Below are listed activity ideas to consider, though this list is not exhaustive by any means.

Early Care and Education Educators & Providers

1. Preparing children

- **Provide practical “hands-on” strategies in the classroom**, including arranging new props in dramatic play, reading books and talking about going to Kindergarten at a large group time, and decreasing nap time during the second semester to wean children from naps. For additional ideas, see Early Care and Education Educators Resources section, “Strategies for Offering Support to: Preschoolers on their Way to Kindergarten.”
- **Create “Aloha Books”** for children to remember their friends from their time in an ECE program. This can include photographs of other children, the child’s parental/caregiver email addresses and phone numbers or social media contacts for children to keep in touch, or special memories the child might have in her/his time in the program.
- **Have an “Aloha Party”** or end-of-year celebration. The Aloha party or celebration can be part of a larger graduation ceremony, or not, as the planning committee thinks best. A celebration is a good opportunity to recognize all the children who are transitioning, whether into another year at the ECE program, to another program, or to Kindergarten.

2. Supporting the families/caregivers

- **Reach out and be a resource for families.** Many families have questions or are unsure how to handle the transition to Kindergarten, and some may not know how to transition a child. Starting the conversation can help. For example, setting aside time to connect and talk with families and caregivers about how they plan to transition their child and which school the child will attend. Asking families and caregivers if they need help registering their child at the new school or obtaining documents. Ask about the families’ own thoughts on their child transitioning to Kindergarten and how they are handling this move.



- **If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**, encourage families to participate in transition conferences. Usually public schools have their own process of helping the child and family enter the Special Education Program. To help teachers partner with families and the new school, the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement has created an online simulation to help ECE program educators practice relationship-building with families and learn

how to make intentional choices about what to discuss with a family member and how to respond to their feedback. The simulation also covers practice in relationship-building between an ECE educator and a special education staff member at a receiving school. The link to this online simulation is available in the Early Care and Education Educator Resources section.

3. Collaborating with school staff, including Kindergarten teachers

- **Set up a campus tour at the elementary school.** A campus tour allows children to familiarize themselves with an elementary school, even if it is not the same one they will attend. Be sure to tour the Kindergarten classrooms and bathrooms, playground, school office, nurse's station, cafeteria, computer room, and library, and ask about the possibility of the children eating a meal or snack in the cafeteria to familiarize them with cafeteria procedures. Perhaps create a "Buddy System" between the visiting ECE children and the Kindergarteners during the visit for safety reasons and to ensure that the children interact with each other. This requires collaboration and planning with the school's administration and Kindergarten teachers.
- **Have a "Family Night" event** for the children who will transition to Kindergarten. Invite a Kindergarten teacher or school administrator to make a presentation at the event. Ask the teacher/administrator to cover topics such as the school's most important rules and policies (e.g., attendance, Kindergarten curriculum and standards, and the differences in standard-based education), and behavior expectations for both children and families. Allow time for families to ask questions of the Kindergarten teacher or school administrator.

Pass out a flyer with prompts (see Family Resource section, "Transitions Affect the Whole Community of Learners") beforehand and ask families to write down any questions or concerns they may have for the teacher or administrator.

- **Ask the elementary school** if it has any summer transition activities for incoming Kindergarten students, such as Keiki Steps to Kindergarten or Kinder Camp or single transition events (Kindergarten Open House). Inform your families. Benefits of summer bridge programs include:

- ☐ Children become familiar with their new school's campus;
- ☐ Children can meet and interact with their new teacher and classmates;
- ☐ Children can practice being separated from family members;
- ☐ Children become more self-confident; and
- ☐ Children and families learn how to be part of a school community.

"The Summer Transition Program was the best opportunity for my son! He is a late born and has no preschool experience. He seems very engaged in telling stories and asking questions since the program."

Parent of the Summer Start Program

Kindergarten Teachers/Educators

1. Supporting new Kindergarten students

(Adapted from “Promoting Healthy Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten,” Steen 2011)



- **Five in a Bag:** Give children a brown paper bag. Ask families to help children bring five things to school that tell their classmates something about themselves and their families. Ask children to share within the first weeks of school. If children cannot bring actual items, ask them to bring or draw pictures of the items.
- **Family Photographs:** Ask children to bring in photographs to share with the class. If children do not have photos, take them

yourself at drop off or pick up time, and print them out. Display the photos in the class so children can view them and classmates can get to better know each other.

- **Superstar Poster/All About Me:** Choose a “superstar” child for the week. Rotate children so they all have a turn. Have parents help their “superstar” child make a poster that includes photos or drawings of things/people that are important to them for the child to share at school.
- **Favorite Book:** Ask children to bring in and present a favorite book. Not all families have books at home, so have some available at your class library or have children pick one out from the school library.
- **Special Object:** Invite children to bring a special object to school during the first few weeks. Some children feel safer and more secure with a favorite object. If educators are uncomfortable with children having distracting objects in their possession during the day, ask the children to share their object with the class and then leave them in a special place in the classroom. As the children become more accustomed to the school environment, they will rely on these objects less. They can eventually be left at home.

2. Creating, developing, and fostering relationships with families/caregivers

(See *Early Learning Administrators & Principals* section, “Support Children and Families with Strong Instructional Practices”)

- Host Kindergarten Parent Orientation activities for the incoming Kindergarteners and their families. At these events, important conversations can take place, and information can be collected and shared. For instance, teachers may want to talk with families about differences in academic expectations between ECE programs and Kindergarten. And families may want to talk with teachers about their child’s talents, interests, and habits.

This is a good opportunity for Kindergarten teachers to learn about the children outside the classroom and one that should be taken advantage of. Included in the Resource section is an information gathering handout entitled “Help Me Know Your

Child” that teachers can use to learn about their Kindergarteners and help start conversations with families and caregivers.

- Foster ongoing communication

(Adapted from “Promoting Healthy Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten”, Steen 2011)

- ☐ Before school starts, send a postcard or letter introducing yourself, the classroom, and information about what a Kindergarten class will be like.
- ☐ Share with families information about how the day is structured, how the curriculum addresses reading, math, and other areas, and how you will support their child’s learning.
- ☐ If families are interested and ask, communicate openly and honestly about their child’s progress and any issues to address jointly.
- ☐ Contact families by phone or email within the first week, and stay in touch throughout the year. Inform families about classroom activities and provide positive feedback about their child’s progress.
- ☐ Share photographs taken throughout the day of classroom activities. Over time, be sure that all children in the class are represented in the photos.

3. Collaborating with ECE educators and community

- **Set a community planning time.** A formal time set aside where Kindergarten teachers can plan with community ECE partners in the area whose children will attend the elementary school. The partners include public and private pre-Kindergarten programs, Head Start programs, Family-Child Interaction Learning programs, or other early childhood programs and service providers.
- **Host “Coffee Hour” meetings.** These are informal meetings between ECE educators and providers and Kindergarten teachers to prepare and plan together. They can take place within schools or across school-community partnerships that work closely together. Perhaps host a coffee hour or “Coffee Talk” time to meet, discuss planning strategies, and share respective perspectives about what is working and what needs improvement in the children’s transitions.
- **Invite community ECE programs for school/classroom visits** and assign your Kindergarten students as “buddies” to the visiting ECE children so the children interact and to allow the ECE children to become familiar with the environment and people associated with Kindergarten.
- **Host community ECE educator visits.** Invite ECE educators to visit Kindergarten classrooms without children and make return visits to ECE classrooms. This encourages



relationship building and supports alignment conversations by giving each set of educators a better idea of how classrooms look and function.

- **Participate in and/or host community-based transition fairs.** Having a table at a community event or hosting a transition fair provides an opportunity to disseminate information about, for example, specific school policies and procedures, Kindergarten registration, Kindergarten assessment procedures (if appropriate), Special Education and English Language Learner services, and after-school services.

RESOURCES

Early Care and Education Educators

1. Strategies for Offering Support to: Preschoolers on Their Way to Kindergarten.
 - A handout using five strategies with suggestions on how to implement the strategies to help prepare children for Kindergarten.
2. Supporting Preschoolers and their Families Through Transitions, Viewers Guide. (2018-2019). National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning.
 - This guide accompanies the webinar series link below. It summarizes key ideas about transitions to Kindergarten for children and families. It has the resources and information presented in the webinar.
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/video/attachments/teacher-time-preschool-transitions-viewers-guide.pdf>
3. Supporting Preschoolers and their Families Through Transitions. (2018-2019). National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning.
 - This is part of a webinar series called Teacher Time. This episode discusses how to support preschoolers and their families through transitions to Kindergarten, as well as transitions that happen throughout the day. It has tips and strategies about supporting preschoolers and their families through transitions. Accompanying text is linked above in the Viewer's Guide. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/teacher-time-series/supporting-preschoolers-their-families-through-transitions>.
4. Transition to Kindergarten: Activity Calendar for Educators
 - An activity calendar for ECE educators to help plan and organize transition activities throughout the year. It includes helpful tips and hints to include in the transition planning process. It can be shared with Kindergarten teachers to help align activities, if educators/schools are partnering. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf>
5. National Association for Educating Young Children (NAEYC) resources: NAEYC is a reputable website with general information about young children for educators. Following are articles about transitioning a child to Kindergarten that educators might find helpful in the Resources section of the NAEYC website: www.naeyc.org/resources.
 - Reducing Challenging Behaviors During Transitions: Strategies for Early Childhood Educators to Share with Parents.

- Saying Goodbye to Preschool and Hello to Kindergarten.
- Transitions to Kindergarten.

6. National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement: Transition to Kindergarten - Partnering with Families and Schools Online Simulation:

- Online simulation tool which allows ECE educators to practice relationship-building skills with families of a child who has an IFSP/IEP. It helps educators learn how to make intentional choices about what to discuss with a family member and how to respond to their feedback. The simulation also covers practice in relationship building between an ECE educator and a receiving special education school staff member.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/parent-family-community-engagement-simulation-boosting-school-readiness-through-effective-family>.

Kindergarten Teachers

1. Strategies for Offering Support to: Preschoolers on their way to Kindergarten.

- A handout using five strategies with suggestions on how to implement the strategies to help build on the preparation of children for Kindergarten.

2. Help Me Know Your Child

- A handout for Kindergarten teachers to use at the beginning of the year with families to help get to know their new students outside the classroom from a family perspective. The handout can also be used as a starting point for conversations with families.



Strategies for Offering Support to: Preschoolers on Their Way to Kindergarten

Strategy 1: Practice cues, routines, activities

Prepare the child for new routines:

- ☐ Gradually introduce new songs, fingerplays, objects, and bathroom procedures.
- ☐ Visit the new settings to identify both familiar and unfamiliar cues and routines.

Regularly implement some of the upcoming routines into present experiences:

- ☐ Remember children's developmental capabilities.
- ☐ Lining up can be different for preschoolers – make it a game and make it short.
- ☐ Create games that require balancing objects on cafeteria trays.
- ☐ Explain to parents how they can introduce cues such as songs or hand signals.
- ☐ Schedule activities with other classes.

Strategy 2: Talk about transition

Talk about what will remain the same and what will change:

- ☐ Show children what activities they will also do in Kindergarten.
- ☐ Take pictures of the new settings – talk about it at home and at school.

Discuss the children's feelings:

- ☐ Use books about change and transition to start discussions.
- ☐ Use pictures of children when they were younger to talk about changes and accomplishments.

Strategy 3: Test out new behaviors

Use play:

- ☐ Provide props from the new setting for dramatic play.
- ☐ Use puppets to introduce new staff – have children talk with them.

Practice skills at home and at school:

- ☐ Have a cafeteria tray day.
- ☐ Integrate practice of self-help skills into daily activities.
- ☐ Practice calling home from the school's office.
- ☐ Invite classmates home to play.
- ☐ Schedule activities with other classes.

Strategy 4: Show children that they belong

Creating a welcoming environment:

- ☐ Display children's names on cubbies, helper charts, and boards.
- ☐ Label materials with pictures and names so children can easily find them.
- ☐ Offer an accessible storage area for children's personal belongings.
- ☐ Have staff greet children as they enter and say goodbye as they leave.
- ☐ Provide peer buddies.
- ☐ Call staff and children by name so that children learn faces and names.
- ☐ Create a role for new children in all activities.

Strategy 5: Build on experiences from home and previous settings

Learn about past experiences:

- ☐ Talk with previous caregivers to learn about children's favorite activities.
- ☐ Organize a transition planning meeting.
- ☐ Share children's records, with permission.

Develop an ongoing connection with home and past settings:

- ☐ Organize a method for two-way communication with families.
- ☐ Encourage family members to volunteer and attend school social events.
- ☐ Allow children to share experiences from previous settings.
- ☐ Encourage and help child to send pictures or cards to previous caregivers.



Adapted from: Steps to Kindergarten Transition: A Guide to a Successful Transition to Kindergarten, 2004

Help Me Know Your Child

A letter from the Kindergarten teacher to the families of their incoming K children

Date: _____

Dear Parents/Families/Caregivers/Guardians,

I invite you to share with me the talents, interests, and habits of your child, so that I may be prepared to teach in the best way possible. Please share concerns about your child so we can have a cooperative team approach to education. Call/email and let me know when you would like to visit our classroom or just to talk to me about your child.

The best time to reach me during the day is from _____ to _____ at:

_____ (telephone) or _____ (email).

Mahalo,

Miss/Ms./Mrs./Mr. _____

1. My child learns best by:
2. Some things I do at home to help my child learn are:
3. Right now, my child's goal/dream is:
4. You will know my child is having problems when:
5. The thing my child likes best about school is:
6. One difficulty my child has at school is:
7. When my child is having difficulty learning something, I find it works best to:
8. Questions I would like to discuss with you include:

Please return this form to me by: _____ . Please add your cell number and/or email address, just in case I do not have it on your emergency contact card.

Cell Number: _____ Email Address: _____

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS & PRINCIPALS

... Making connections with children, families, and community

Schools begin preparing for Kindergarten transition at the beginning of the new calendar year. Early care and education (ECE) administrators, educators, and staff begin preparations to eventually say goodbye to the children in their programs who are moving on to Kindergarten. Elementary school principals and school staff begin preparing for Kindergarten registration and to say hello to a new group of Kindergartners. Often the goal of a pre-Kindergarten or ECE program is to prepare children to do well in the next step of their educational journey, and an elementary school's goal is to be well prepared to welcome new children into the school to start their Kindergarten year.

ECE administrators and elementary school principals both play a unique role in the transition to Kindergarten process. They can facilitate processes at a program- or school-wide level in order to make the transition smooth at the individual child's level, less worrisome at the family level, and more fluid at the teacher and classroom level. Included in this section are ideas and ways for ECE administrators and elementary school principals, as instructional leaders, to support the transition of children into Kindergarten classrooms and the elementary school campus as a whole.

Presented in this section of the Toolkit, there are four areas to help administrators and principals think about this process – as a liaison to the community, as a collaborator in the community, to help build home-to-school partnerships, and as a leader who encourages high-quality instructional practices.

Administrators' and Principals' Roles in the Transition

A Liaison to the Community. Administrators and principals are able to serve as a liaison for their respective educational settings with the greater community, especially around the topic of transitioning children into the school's K classrooms. This can be done by:

- Both administrators and principals making concerted efforts to build connections between the educational settings. This can be done in a number of ways and at various times throughout the year (see the “A Collaborator in the Community” section below for ideas) and should be done within the specific community through ongoing collaboration and advance planning by all stakeholders.

For ECE administrators, building connections with the local elementary school(s) is sufficient. However, for an elementary school principal, community stakeholders can include center-based ECE programs that are available in the community, home-care providers, family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs, and other entities that offer programs for young children, such as home-visiting services.

Early Care and Education Administrators and Elementary School Principals

- Liaisons to the community
- Collaborators in the community
- Leaders of “Home-School” partnerships
- Supporters of high-quality instructional practices



- Developing a written transition plan specific to the individual educational settings (see Introduction Section, “Creating a Transition Plan”). Work with the various stakeholder programs and the teachers in the school to help craft it. Review and monitor it each year and use it as a tool to help the children transition. Revise it as necessary.
- Allocating resources to support transition efforts (see Educator Section, “Transition Activities”).

A Collaborator in the Community. Administrators and principals can model genuine collaboration by enacting policies that support collaboration. This can be done by:

- Creating opportunities for elementary school teachers to visit various ECE programs and settings that children will be transitioning from, and vice versa. During these visits, opportunities should be included for staff to sit together to discuss and plan.
- Scheduling multiple times for ECE educators and elementary school teachers to plan together. Scheduled time for collaboration to occur is especially important for elementary campuses that house other on-campus programs (e.g., Executive Office on Early Learning public pre-Kindergarten classrooms, Pre-Plus classrooms, Head Start classrooms, FCIL classrooms, etc.). The planned collaboration time allows ECE educators and Kindergarten teachers to work together to build strong bridges between the classrooms in order to facilitate robust cooperation between the teachers and fluid transitional practices.
- Including nearby staff in professional learning opportunities across various settings. Efforts that bring ECE educators and Kindergarten teachers together in shared training provide an opportunity to align expectations, curricula, instructional strategies, and learning environment, which creates a continuum of learning that builds on the previous year.

Leaders in “Home-School” Partnerships. Administrators and principals can lead and model partnerships between home and school environments, which can help decrease the separation between the two settings, making the transition less stressful for children, families, teachers, and staff. This can be done by:

- Setting the stage in various ways for families to feel comfortable in their relationship with the school: Both the ECE administrator and school principal being available to answer questions from transitioning families, and principals hosting activities for young children and their families on the elementary school campus, for example.

- Elementary school principals: Support the efforts of teachers and staff to reach out to incoming Kindergarten families in non-traditional ways such as canvassing neighborhoods to distribute information, evening registration, creating an online or electronic medium for registering new students, or setting appointment times for families to bring in registration paperwork.

Support Children and Families with High-Quality Instructional Practices.

- Administrators and principals can support children and families by encouraging high-quality, developmentally appropriate instructional practices in the school and within classrooms to support positive child outcomes. This can be done by promoting the use of meaningful child assessments to better understand the strengths and needs of each child.
- Seeking and sharing the latest information on effective transition practices with staff.
- Establishing and supporting effective early intervention and literacy programs for children and their families, including providing a space on the current campus for community literacy programs or community playgroups with a literacy emphasis.
- Elementary school principals: Create opportunities for incoming Kindergarteners who have not attended preschool and their families to have access to transition programs.
 - ❑ A summer transition program, such as Kinder Camp, provides an opportunity for incoming Kindergarteners to become familiar with the school campus, interact with future classmates, learn to be separated from their families, become more self-confident, and learn to be part of the school community. Ideally, the summer program should be more than a couple of hours before the first day of school.
 - ❑ Kindergarten Family Orientation/Open House serves as an invitation for families to bring children to local elementary schools to orient the children and themselves to the school environment, personnel, rules, routines, and expectations.
 - ❑ Encouraging families to visit and tour the school campus, including a visit to a Kindergarten classroom, sends a welcoming message to families and provides an opportunity for them to become familiar with the new school environment before the first day of school.



RESOURCES

1. ABC's of "Sending Programs"

- A handout of activities to transition children out of ECE programs into Kindergarten as a "Sending Program"

2. ABC's of "Receiving Programs"

- A handout of activities to transition children out of ECE programs into Kindergarten as a "Receiving Program"

3. For additional resources: These are links to reputable websites with general information about young children for Administrators and Principals. Here are links to articles about transitioning a child to Kindergarten that Administrators and Principals might find helpful:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/school-readiness>.
- Administration for Children & Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions>.



ABC'S OF "SENDING PROGRAMS"

Early Care and Education Programs

Adapted from Kay Dixon, Partnerships for Inclusion, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- A**ddress transition goals in the Individualized Education program (IEP) for children with disabilities.
- B**e positive about the transition process with all families.
- C**hange your routines to include activities to help ease the children's transition.
- D**etermine the family's comfort level in being involved in the transition process.
- E**mphasize similarities between the "sending programs"/home and the "receiving programs" (In Hawai'i, over half the children come to Kindergarten from home).
- F**requently provide information about the new school to the family and child.
- G**ather a portfolio of the child's work and photos of the child to pass to Kindergarten.
- H**elp families connect to their new school.
- I**nvolve the family and realize that each family has individual transition needs.
- J**uggle schedules and be flexible in responding to the family's and the child's needs.
- K**now and learn about the "receiving program/school."
- L**ist the child's goals, interests, and recent accomplishments.
- M**ake sure numerous options for service delivery are examined at the new school, especially for children with disabilities.
- N**ame all the people that the child and family will meet at the new school.
- O**pt to spend time at the "receiving program/school."
- P**rovide current, comprehensive and helpful information about the child.
- Q**uickly share lots of photos and memories of children and families with the "receiving program/school."
- R**ead books about change to the children and prepare them in advance for transition.
- S**uggest and keep families informed about summer activities and events.
- T**ransfer all information and records in a timely way.
- U**nderstand and address separation anxiety (your own, the child's and family's).
- V**isit a neighboring elementary school with the children and families.
- W**ritten transition plans help support children and families.
- eX**amine your program – make sure you support children and families to the fullest.
- Y**early evaluation of the transition process is important. Try to improve each year.
- Z**ip! Active listening! Remember to listen to the concerns of others.

ABC'S OF "RECEIVING PROGRAMS"

Kindergarten, Elementary Schools

Adapted from Kay Dixon, Partnerships for Inclusion, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Assign a mentor parent to assist families who are interested in such support during the transition.

Be flexible and remember transition is not a "one-size-fits-all" process.

Consider new classroom schedule methods and/or modify existing ones to meet the children's individual needs.

Develop strategies for creating smooth transitions for children and families.

Emphasize similarities between the "sending programs"/home and the "receiving programs" (In Hawai'i, at many elementary schools, over half the children come to Kindergarten from home).

Familiarize yourself with the family by inviting them into your classroom.

Give a luncheon or open house for "sending" teachers, children, and their families.

Help families connect to their new school. Have welcoming activities and events.

Invoke the child and family to visit Kindergarten before the child starts school.

Juggle the enrollment schedule to give yourself a chance to get to know children and families, for example by staggering the start of school.

Know something about each child before school begins.

Learn about the values and cultures of the communities in which you teach.

Make home visits to get to know new children and their families.

Note allergies, medications, and menu modifications for new children.

Observe the children for signs of how they are adjusting.

Provide families with information about your program and remember that many families need written information in their primary language.

Quickly take lots of photos of the children in your classroom and share them with families.

Read books to the children about changes and acknowledge their feelings during transition.

Support the children's development of a positive self-concept.

Training on campus can include early care and education colleagues (joint training).

Understand and address separation anxiety (the child's and family's).

Visit the "sending" neighborhood early care and education programs annually.

Written transition plans developed by a Transition Team are considered the best practice. (The team includes elementary school staff, early care and education staff, parents, agencies).

eXamine your program – make sure you have everything ready for new enrollees.

Yearly evaluation of the transition process is important. Try to improve each year.

Zip! Active listening! Remember to listen to the concerns of others.

REFERENCES

Administration for Children & Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center has comprehensive transition resources for families and caregivers and educators.

Atchison, B. & Pompelia, S. (2018). Transitions and Alignment from Preschool to Kindergarten. Education Commission of the States Special Report. <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Transitions-and-Alignment-From-Preschool-to-Kindergarten.pdf>.

Bailey, D. (1999). Forward. In R.C. Pianta & M.J. Cox (Eds.). The Transition to Kindergarten (pp.xv-xci). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Bornfreund, L., Ewen, D., & McDonald, D. (2019). Using Local, State, and Federal Dollars to Improve Pre-K to K Transitions. New America Education Policy.

Davis, B. (2005). How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Dockett, S. & Perry, B. (2001). Starting School: Effective Transitions. Early Childhood Research & Practices, Vol. 3.

Executive Office on Early Learning. (2013). Hawai'i Family Partnership Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings. State of Hawai'i.

Family Hui (2019). Embracing Your Child's Journey as Your Child's First Teacher. Family Hui. https://familyhuihawaii.org/v2/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FirstTeacher_vWeb.pdf.

Good Beginnings Alliance. (2004). Steps to Kindergarten Transition A Guide to a Successful Transition to Kindergarten. School Readiness Task Force Hawai'i Good Beginnings Interdepartmental Council. <https://multco.us/file/8957/download>.

Halgunseth, L.C. (2009). Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature. Young Children, September 2009. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Harbin, G., Rous, B., Peeler, N., Schuster, J., & McCormick, K. (2007). Desired Family Outcomes of the Early Childhood Transition Process. NECTC Research Brief #5. National Early Childhood Transition Center.

Hawai'i State Department of Education English Learner Program:
<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/Organization/Offices/StudentSupportServices/StudentServicesBranch/Pages/EL.aspx>.

Hawai'i State Department of Education How to Enroll: <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/EnrollingInSchool/HowToEnroll/Pages/home.aspx>.

Hawai'i State Department of Education Kindergarten GLOs. http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/GLO/GLOs_Kinder.pdf

Hawai'i State Department of Education Resources for Homeless Families:
<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/EnrollingInSchool/Pages/Resources-for-homeless-families.aspx>.

- Hawai'i State Department of Education Special Education:
<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/SpecializedPrograms/SpecialEducation/Pages/home.aspx>.
- Hawai'i State Department of Health School Health Requirements: <https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/vaccines-immunizations/school-health-requirements/>.
- Hirsch, G. & Strip, C. (2000). Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers. Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.
- Kielty, M., Passe, A., & Mayle, S.R. (2013). Transitions to Kindergarten. Teaching Young Children, April/May 2013, Vol. 6, No. 4.
- Kraft-Sayre, M. & Pianta, R. (2001). Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Connecting Families and Elementary Schools. Dimensions of Early Childhood, Vol. 29, No.1, p. 25-29.
- Lantham, S. (2018). Kindergarten transition and readiness. (Mashburn, A. J., LoCasale-Crouch, J., Pears, K.C.P., Eds.). Springer.
- Learning To Grow. Raising a School Ready Child Readiness Resources: <http://learningtogrowhawaii.org/resources/type/raising-a-school-ready-child-readiness/>.
- Lombardi, J. (1992). Beyond Transition: Ensuring Continuity in Early Childhood Services. ERIC Digest, ED345867.
- Loewenberg, A. (2017). Connecting Steps: State Strategies to Ease the Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten. New America Education Policy. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/connecting-steps/>.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. School Readiness Resources: <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/school-readiness>.
- National Center for Early Development & Learning. (Winter 2002). Transition to Kindergarten. Early Childhood Research & Policy Briefs, Vol. 2, #2. https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/NCEDL_Brief2_2.pdf.
- Pianta, R.C., & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, and Schools. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.
- Rimm-Kaufman, S. & Pianta, R.C. (2000). An Ecological Perspective on the Transition to Kindergarten; A Theoretical Framework to Guide Empirical Research. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology 21, no. 5: 491-511.
- Steen, B.F. (2011). Promoting Healthy Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten. Young Children; March 2011, Vol. 66, No.2. National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Strasser, J. Transitioning to Kindergarten. National Association for the Education of Young Children. <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/transitioning-to-kindergarten>.
- Supporting Preschoolers and their Families Through Transitions, Viewers Guide. (2018-2019). The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning.

Tours, S. & Dennis, L.R. (2015). Easing First Day Jitters: Strategies for Successful Home-to-School Transitions. *Young Children*; September 2015, Vol. 70, No.4. National Association for the Education of Young Children.



Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL)

2759 South King Street, C-7 and C-8,

Honolulu, HI 96826

Phone: 808.784.5350

Email: info@earlychildhoodhawaii.com